

WASHINGTON, DC—On March 30, 2009, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) voted for H.R. 20, the Melanie Blocker-Stokes Postpartum Depression Research & Care Act, which the House of Representatives passed by a vote of 391 to 8. The bill authorizes \$3 million of funding for National Institutes of Health (NIH) research into the causes, incidence, diagnosis, and treatment of Postpartum Depression. The bill also directs NIH to establish new information and education programs for health care professionals and the public to better prevent and detect this unfortunate disease.

“Postpartum depression affects too many new mothers, and is recognized by too few doctors. Hopefully, by better understanding the causes of this disease and better educating our health care professionals and expecting mothers we can lessen the impact of postpartum depression,” said Congressman Sestak after the passage of the bill.

Postpartum depression is a mood disorder which can affect women during and after pregnancy. Roughly 400,000 women experience postpartum depression each year. “Baby blues”, the most common and the least severe form of postpartum depression, affects nearly 80% of new mothers. Though less common, its most serious form, postpartum psychosis, has serious effects and can lead to hallucinations, paranoia and suicide.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of “Deep Blue,” the Navy’s anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the “Global War on Terrorism.” He served as President Clinton’s Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.